

# Do you need cervical screening services?

## *What you should know:*

Each year, more than 350 North Carolina women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and more than 100 die from the condition. The majority of these deaths occur in women over 45.

Don't let that happen to you. No one should die from cervical cancer. When it is detected early, most deaths from cervical cancer can be prevented through appropriate treatment.

Most cervical cancers develop over a relatively long period of time, during which abnormal tissue can be easily detected through a Pap test. Women typically do not have symptoms until abnormal cervical cells become cancerous. Then, the most common symptom is abnormal vaginal bleeding.

Almost all cervical cancer deaths could be prevented by a combination of routine Pap tests and appropriate follow-up of abnormal screening results.

**Don't wait until it's too late—get screened today!**



The North Carolina Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP) provides free or low-cost cervical cancer screenings and follow-up as needed to eligible women in North Carolina.

## **Who is eligible for BCCCP?**

Women aged 18-64 who:

- have a household income at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level;
- are uninsured or underinsured; and
- are without Medicare Part B or Medicaid.

Women are eligible for cervical cancer screenings if they meet all of the above criteria.

## **What services are available?**

- A pelvic exam and Pap test
- Colposcopy (a procedure, much like a Pap test, that uses a special microscope to look into the vagina and very closely at the cervix)
- Colposcopy-directed biopsy (taking a small sample of tissue for further study)
- Office visits associated with a Pap test and colposcopy

## **What are you waiting for?**

To find a local BCCCP provider near you, call **1-800-662-7030** or **919-707-5300**.

## **Risk factors for cervical cancer**

- The most important risk factor for cervical cancer is infection with human papillomavirus (HPV), a common sexually transmitted infection.
- Women are at increased risk of developing cervical cancer if they engage in sexual intercourse at an early age or have multiple sexual partners.
- Women who smoke are twice as likely as non-smokers to develop cervical cancer.
- HIV or chlamydia infection can contribute to the risk for cervical cancer.

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## What is a Pap test?

A Pap test is a quick and simple, generally painless, test identifying cancer cells or other changes in and around your cervix. During a pelvic exam, the doctor or nurse inserts a speculum into your vagina and uses a swab to collect cells from your cervix. Those cells are then sent to a lab to be checked for abnormalities.

## What if my results are abnormal?

Changes in your cervix may result in an abnormal Pap test. Abnormal Pap test results do not always mean you have cancer. Infections can also cause abnormal Pap results. Any change in your cervix can be found early and followed up with care, even if the abnormality is not cancerous.

## Screening recommendations

The North Carolina Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program recommends that all women who are sexually active or over age 21 talk to their health care providers about receiving cervical cancer screening. National guidelines recommend that after a woman receives a satisfactory Pap result for three or more consecutive annual examinations, she should then get the Pap test less frequently at the discretion of her physician, usually once every two to three years.

*For more information about N.C. BCCCP,  
please call 919.707.5300.*

## Additional Resources

### American Cancer Society

[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)  
800.227.2345 or  
TTY 866.228.4327

### National Women's Health Information Center

[www.4women.gov/faq/ccervix.htm](http://www.4women.gov/faq/ccervix.htm)  
800.994.9662 or  
TDD 888.220.5446

### Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation

[www.komen.org](http://www.komen.org)  
877.465.6636

### National Cancer Institute

[www.cancer.gov/cancer\\_information/cancer\\_type/cervical/](http://www.cancer.gov/cancer_information/cancer_type/cervical/)  
800.422-6237 or  
TTY 800.332.8615

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical)

### N.C. Comprehensive Cancer Program

919.707.5300

